

Why I Am An Atheist

The Theist dogmatizes and affirms that there is a personal God. The Atheist expresses disbelief in a personal God, and calls upon the Theist to prove His existence.

If God had never been affirmed He could not have been devised. It is a rule of logic that the burden of proof rest upon those who affirm a proposition.

Theists not only affirm that there is a personal God, but claim that he has written His laws and His will in a book called the Holy Bible, and given it to the human race for their guidance. These affirmations have been made millions of times for thousands of years; but those who affirm have never complied with the rule of logic.

Since only a small portion of the human race has ever heard of the Bible (and its contents contradict the demonstrated laws of nature); since Bible characters are the most brutal murderers, immoral, and unprincipled in the annals of literature, and this personal God has never given the slightest hint of His existence, except in the diseased minds of ignorant and fanatical religionists. Since I cannot conceive of the God of the universe going into the book business for the guidance of his creatures, when a large majority of them cannot read, to preserve my mental integrity I am forced to be an Atheist.

The Theist and the Pantheist are, to my mind, in the same dilemma. The Pantheist says "God is in everything, is the soul of the world." If this is so, then God is in all the horrors of nature. He is in the good and in the bad, in all the imperfection and wickedness on the earth. He suffers with us in bodily and mental pain. He denies and insults Himself in the minds of some of His creatures, and reveres and worships Himself in the minds of others. He worries Himself with the mysteries about us, dies in each individual, rewards Himself in heaven, and punishes Himself in hell.

My reason rejects such ideas; therefore I am an Atheist.

The Theist affirms that "God is love" and takes what suits his purpose in the operations of Nature, to prove it, and leaves all things in Nature that would disprove it, severely alone.

Life and death are either the decrees of God, or according to the laws of Nature.

If life is a blessing, death is a curse.

It is an incontrovertible fact that Nature prevents the universal triumph of death. Is this a doing of a God of love? Or are there two Gods—a kind one giving life—and a cruel one taking it away.

The Theist affirms that through Revelation the existence of a personal God is proved. Revelation means something superadded to Reason, but it is also an incontrovertible fact, that Reason has to determine what is, and what is not revelation, therefore Reason is superior to it. The Christian says to me "you deny that there is a God" I answer, "No, I deny that there is sufficient reason to believe that there is one, and I am sorry that I can't have the temerity to affirm that there is one."

The church spire of the Theist, we are told, points us to God. We strain our eyes and imagination at— we see only the heavens, and the sun, moon and stars; but no God is there. We search the earth and even explore the mental realms, but no God can be found. Then we remember that the Bible, which the Theist claims was written by God, says, "God is past finding out." No man hath seen God at any time. No man could look upon God and live.

If these things are true it is a waste of time and an intrusion on an exclusive deity to try and find him. Yet I have been told by many Christians that "they have found God." Buchner propounds this pertinent question to believers in a personal God: "Why did not the everlasting creative power write his name in starry letters in the heavens; and thus put an end to all these doubts that torment the human mind, to all these endless controversies about His existence, which have caused so much pain and grief to poor humanity, groping forever in the darkness? Why should he hide himself from us, and lay snare for our reason, which inveigle us into endless doubts."

"How could God, if He exists, quietly witness all the sad results of this uncertainty about His own existence, seeing that he could so easily put an end to them?"

With Buchner we exclaim, "How could He?" This is a natural question and should be answered by those who affirm the existence of a personal God.

An absolute demonstration of the existence of a personal God would bring every Atheist on the face of the earth into the Christian fold before the rising of another sun.

This one demonstration would do away with the need of missionaries; for it would swing into the Christian fold the Chinese, Japanese and Buddhists of all types who are all Atheists, beside the intellectual titans of all the Christian nations who are pronounced Atheists, and lead the 'march of mind.'

The Theist simply affirms the existence of a personal God. The Atheist demonstrates that the universe is not ruled by a capricious personal God, but by inflexible laws.

The Theist affirms that "God sits upon His throne in heaven, and rules the world."

The scientist demonstrates that "the law of measure and number rules in the changeable hosts of the stars, as it does in the brain of man." The Theist affirms that the throne of his personal God is a "mercy seat" in face

of the fact that there is not one living creature in the universe that is not a sufferer; yet the Theist asserts that "God doth all things well."

When the Atheist asks the reason why this world is filled with suffering, sorrow tragedy and catastrophe, coined from the brain and heart of humanity, the Theist quotes his Bible, "He that preaches any other Gospel let him be accursed." "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

The earth has been deluged with tears and blood, devastated by fire and sword, and the sword and wrinkle with graves; yet the Theist's personal "God of love" has ever been deaf, dumb, and blind to the horrors and tragedies of the centuries. For this reason, if for no other, I am an Atheist.

The Theist affirms that 'Atheism is a bloody and ferocious belief' in face of the facts, that Theism has the bloodiest record in the annals of time, that the Atheistical nations never waged war on other nations, and that Christian nations are now armed to the teeth, and the newly made graves in China, the Philippines, and South Africa attest the brutality and ferocity of Theistical nations.

For this reason I am an Atheist.

The Theist says it is dangerous for Atheism to corrupt the minds of children in face of the fact that pernicious Christian teaching has turned this world into a jarring battle field, and a slaughter house, and our prisons and scaffolds swarm with believers in a personal God.

For this reason I am an Atheist.

The Theist asserts that to doubt or deny the existence of a personal God is shocking to his feelings, ignoring the fact that the assertions of the Theist about his personal God, with His vicarious atonement, heaven, hell and His decree that there is not one good human being on the earth and that all deserve eternal punishment, and would receive it, but for the efficacy of the blood of a slain God, are shocking in the extreme to Atheist.

The Theist says to the Atheist: "Ah! when you come to die, you will wish you were a Christian."

Can it be that accepting the things against which my reason revolts, and denying to others the mental liberty I claim for myself will give me peace in my dying hour? If to do this is to be a Christian may I not "die the death of the righteous or my last end be like his."

I am an Atheist because I recognize that the human mind has always been threatened by gloomy dogmas, and its liberality systematically robbed of its own mythical God. To my mind, the only thing should be alleviated when if God's exchequer has to remain empty, if, as is claimed, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." He does not need the devotion, dollars or dimes of his suffering creatures. For all these and many more reasons, I am an Atheist.

For my difference in opinion from the Theist upon the question of God, I offer no apology, I make no contract to think as He does, and I am under no obligation to do so. But I am ever open to conviction, and conversion. Yet, until the existence of a personal God is demonstrated, my convictions force me to remain an Atheist.

JOSEPHINE K. HENRY.
Versailles, Ky.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

I am asked to give my reasons for being an Atheist or Freethinker. Will say I never could believe those silly clergy and foolish Bible stories. The clergy told me to pray and God would manifest himself to me. I tried that, but no manifestation. They lied to me. That started me to doubting their holiness. They were holy liars.

About twenty-five years ago two Mormon cocks came along. They claimed God told Joe Smith to save the people by soaking, washing, oiling, dressing them different from the old style. I listened to them and they told me if I would repent of my sins and let them dunk me and lay their hands on me, I would receive the holy shadow or ghost. I did so and received nothing, and they told me a holy lie. I stayed with them about eight years praying 5 times a day and got no benefit. This is the only crime I am guilty of.

They wanted me to lie and say the gospel was true. No, I could not do that. I could, but would not. I remembered the story of the side-show. A living curiosity, a horse with his tail where his head ought to be, tied by his tail to a manger. Most of the people got fooled and want to fool some other fool.

The Mormons are as good as any other brand of Christians. The Elders are called "of God," as was Aaron. They travel without purse or scrip. God calls them to preach and the devil pays their board bill while preaching and the simple reason I am a Freethinker is there is no good in any that I have tried; and the kind I tried was as fresh from God as any.

GEO. J. WHEELER.
Logan, Utah.

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Mrs. Closz's Column

THE PET OF THE HOME.

(Dorothy Dix in N. O. Picayune).
In Toledo, Ohio, the interesting question of what a married woman has a right to have any pet except her husband is to be settled by law. In that city a man has brought suit against his wife for divorce, alleging that the cat had alienated her affections, and that she devotes the time to fondling pussy that she should spend in petting and caressing him.

The outcome of this case will be enormously important to all women, for if it be established that, in addition to honoring and obeying her husband, a wife is also legally bound to make a pet of him, it greatly complicates matrimony, which already had a sufficient number of snags in it. Heretofore, as long as a woman's pet was a quadruped instead of a biped, husbands have been content to regard the little beast as an innocuous safety valve for a woman's desire to talk baby talk to something; but if it can be shown that little Fido and tabby are sufficient causes of jealousy, no wife will be sure of her job.

Before, however, it be decided that a wife has no right to any pet except her husband, justice demands that it be ascertained that he is a pettable creature. Unfortunately this is not the case with all husbands. There are—good upright men—who are admirable husbands and providers, but whom no one could pet without getting frost bitten, and there are others who are about as safe to pet as it would be to pet a sore headed bear on the raw spot.

Many a woman who marries with the laudable intention of making her husband a pet, has to set up a poodle or canary bird as a substitute, for it is one of the jarring experiences of matrimony to find out that the little ways that your sweet-heart considered cute, your husband brands as idiotic, and that the man who, before marriage yearned to support your fairylike form by the hour, after marriage complains of your weight if you happen to lean against him.

Moreover, if it be established that a husband is entitled to be the sole household pet he should be required to show that he keeps himself in a careensable attitude. Does he chirrup like the canary when his wife approaches him? Does he kiss her hand and follow her footsteps like her devoted dog? Does he purr when she strokes the hair upon his brow like her cat? Or, does he, when his wife attempts to tickle him under the chin tell her that she is musing his collar; and when she asks him, "cos quiky is 'oo?" discouragingly return "For heaven's sake shut up. I'm trying to read the stock market." There must be the reciprocity of appreciation, at least, in petting, and if a husband expects to be petted, he must expect to pet back.

No matter, though, whether a wife is legally bound to make her husband a pet or not, there is practically no doubt about the expediency of her doing it. You couldn't drag the admission out of a man with wild horses, but it is just this desire to be petted that lures more men into matrimony than anything else in the world, and explain why the little fool woman with carressing ways can marry six times to the strong-minded woman's none.

No matter how intelligent a man is, no matter how great his achievements in the world, no matter how stern and dignified he is to the public, he wants some woman to make a baby of him, to pet and caress him, to talk nonsense to him—to "munch"—him as homely New England people say. It is the eternal child that exists far deeper in a man's nature than it does in a woman's, and any wife who fails to take account of it with dealing with her husband makes the mistake of her life.

When the light of the honeymoon begins to fade on the domestic horizon, the wife, like the husband, generally settles down to the hard and prosaic facts of life. She cuts out the petting and the "munching," because she thinks that John is too much occupied with business to notice or care for such childishness. She forgets that in this she commits a deadly error. Nobody who has been fed on pie can come down to earth and know the difference. We laugh when we read in the account of the breach of promise suit of some elderly, fat, bald, hard-headed man of affairs signing himself "Baby Bunting," or "Ducky Biddle," or "Little Boy Blue," or something else equally insane and silly, but it is the woman who knows enough to know that no man ever gets too old to want to be petted, who walks off with the money. The children of this world could give a good many tips to the children of light, if only the saints had gumption enough to take them.

The spectacle, anyway, of the woman an unduly fond of her dog, or cat, or canary, is a pathetic one, for it tells of a lonely heart waiting its affections in a world that is hungry for love, and any movement that would establish the husband as the pet of the home would make for universal happiness. Certainly there are few old maids who wouldn't be glad to trade off their cats for a nice, kind, pettable husband, and, if you don't believe this just ask them.

(Chicago Chronicle.)

One of the valued possessions of the late Stuart Robson was a collection of scrapbooks compiled by the comedian with great care. They did not contain press clippings, either. Mr. Robson was a radical freethinker and he neglected no opportunity to point out what he considered the unworthiness of the clergy. He cut out all the reports of their misdeeds that appeared in the newspapers and for a number

of years he added these clippings assiduously to his collection. The scrapbooks increased so much in bulk at last that he was compelled to give up the task. But he was always proud of the monument that he had raised to his opinions.

Webster City, Ia., May 27.
I enclose for reprint the following article which appeared in the Harrison county Journal. The recommendation to "Teach Boys to Shoot," is a fair example of the article's flooding the press of the country and keeping at fever heat the desire to kill our fellows. This sentiment can never be eradicated while the belief in the vicarious atonement of Christianity prevails. The Blade Club and all writers for the press among us should protest in either great or small publications at every opportunity.

TEACH THEM TO SHOOT.

To Editor Journal:—The above heads an article in the May 15th issue of the Journal, which says an effort is being made by members of the National Guard of Washington, D. C., to have the matter of rifle practice taken up by the young men of the local schools, instead of spending all their time and energy on base ball, foot ball and other sports.

We are to infer from this that the sports indulged for pleasure and pastime are to be superseded by training in rifle practice with the avowed declaration that we are to steady our nerve that we may do better execution in slaying the men of other nations—that we are to train our eyes to locate and pierce without the tremor of a muscle, the heart of other mother's sons as deserving of life as ours—that, we are to be prepared to participate in scenes of carnage with a leer of triumph instead of a tear of pity, and hear unmoved wails of the anguished victims we have slain. The argument of the construction of armament and physical preparation makes for peace, is without force for such preparation is at once matched by other nations, and the constant sharpening of teeth and claws inevitably results in a disastrous war. The past has shown us that the citizen soldier has done efficient work in defending the home, so why should we withhold billions of dollars yearly from the industrial pursuits for the purpose of supplying and teaching to operate the great unwieldy steeldad battle ships, the monster disappearing cannon which is wrecked after a few shots, and the brands of individual arms which are constantly being changed? How truly has Logfellow said:

"Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the world bestowed on arms and war,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no needs of arsenals and forts."

What we need is a movement for constructive armies instead of destructive ones. The military heroes should not be unduly praised while the men who add to the sum of human happiness in the industrial and economic field receive no recognition.

The movement to introduce rifle practice in the schools is only an entering wedge to the compulsory military service of the old world, and should be discountenanced by the people. We are told that—"Let a boy grow up with a gun in his hand and he will invariably be a crack shot." Yes, the fends of the South prove the aspirants for such honors to be not only "quick on the trigger," but they invariably kill their man. The cow-puncher "pulls and fires," with neatness and dispatch. The train robber can plug the bull's eye every time, and the man who shoots his wife has had an acquaintance with a gun. But none of these "crack shots" are benefitting society or their victims. As well say teach the girls to shoot that they may be able to do likewise. No, let the harmless sports continue and let us spend the time and energy and money used in preparation and actual military service in seeking to solve the problems of life. Let us disabuse the mind of the inhuman fallacy that to be great we must murder other peoples. Let us seek for the secrets of nature which endow man with a sound body and progressive mind. Let us strike from distorted limbs the fetters of tradition and furnish a clear title to nature's resources for every human being, by making the waste places of the earth to blossom like the rose. The energy and treasure devoted to war would accomplish many reforms and dethrone the savage instinct in the race, but so long as warlike ideals are perpetuated and examples in practice continued universal peace will be impossible.

The secretary of war is out of his latitude in "backing" the movement to take up rifle practice in local schools. The patriotic citizens of a nation are not always the warlike ones.

HARRIET M. CLOSZ.

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WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.
Because I am in love with truth. Nature tells me all about it. I am ashamed of my pedigree. Nearly all of my ancestors were poor blind fools. I don't like a living, dwelling, murderous daddy. Any man who reads the

Bible and does not become an Atheist appears to me to be very weak minded.

We live amongst degenerate people. Men do anything for money; murder, steal and lie to get it. Men manufacture a god, and then ridicule him; they will not allow him to be boss. He don't show himself to his people, only to a few chosen ones; and they can only converse with him in disguise.

I don't want a coward for a god. Nature speaks open-faced to all who listen. To be good is to do good. No mythical god can make me any better. Nature will, in course of time, improve all things. It told me so. I love to commune with nature. It told me it brought my mother and father here before me; it made me also; it takes care of me; furnishes all of my pleasures and enjoyments. It is going to take me back to its bosom after I have worn myself out. It holds no judgment over my good or bad behaviors. It has no counterpart (a devil). It is all in all, and nothing else.

If I want to feel good I study nature. Man's imaginary creations make me sick. I cannot see them. I want to see all. I want to believe. Man is a wonderful animal. He travels across land, water and even through the air. Nature taught him how to do it.

Scripture only tells us how to become murderers, gripping, craving, raping, murderous miscreants. I don't want to make money to buy myself a place outside of nature's world. I don't like the idea of having my mother take a back seat. She suffered and bore me, and ought to have a front seat.

I like to see every one have equal rights as nature intends they should. Nature gives superior intelligence to some; that's all the inequalities needed. I don't want representatives of imaginary gods, and sovereign rulers over mankind. I want them all to raise their own potatoes. I think this is enough to explain why I am an Atheist. I can't climb much and would be scared to death if I had to climb a god's ladder. I might lose my specks and slip, and then—well six feet below the surface of the ground is drop enough for me.

C. A. WAGNER.
Lexington, Ky.

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